

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-02 MCT-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01
/073 W

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P R 131801Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 291
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
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USMISSION NATO
USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SP
SUBJECT: BASQUE PRO AMNESTY PROTESTS DETERIORATE INTO
VIOLENCE LEAVING ONE, AND POSSIBLY TWO, DEAD

1. THE PRO AMNESTY WEEK IN THE BASQUE PROVINCES
DEGENERATED INTO VIOLENCE YESTERDAY, WITH CONFRONTATIONS
BETWEEN DEMONSTRATORS AND POLICE PUNCTUATING A "DAY OF
STRUGGLE" AND GENERAL STRIKE IN THE ALWAYS VOLATILE
PROVINCE OF GUIPUZCOA. IN THE TOWN OF RENTERIA, CIVIL
GUARD ELEMENTS OPENED FIRE ON A REPORTED 1000 MARCHERS
ADVANCING TOWARD THE CIVIL GUARD HEADQUARTERS, KILLING ONE
ELEDERLY MAN ON THE SPOT, AND WOUNDING SIX OTHERS, TWO OF
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THEM GRAVELY. AMCONSUL BILBAO ADVISES THAT A REPORT IS
NOW CIRCULATING THAT ONE OF THE GRAVELY WOUNDED DEMONSTRATORS
DIED THIS MORNING.

2. THE GUIPUZCOAN CAPITAL OF SAN SABASTION ALSO WAS THE
SCENE OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN DEMONSTRATORS AND POLICE,
AND AMCONSUL BILBAO REPORTS THAT BY LATE AFTERNOON THE

ENTIRE PROVINCE WAS COMPLETELY SHUT DOWN AS THE RESULT OF THE GENERAL STRIKE CALL. AMCONSUL BILBAO REPORTS FURTHER THAT TENSIONS HAVE HEIGHTENED TODAY, AS THE RESULT OF YESTERDAY'S SHOOTINGS, WITH GUIPUZCOA STILL SHUT DOWN AND MORE DEMONSTRATIONS AND THE CLOSING OF COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN BIALBO.

3. YESTERDAY'S VIOLENCE CAME AFTER A DELEGATION OF FOUR BASQUE LEADERS (ONE EACH FROM THE PNV, ANV, ANDES B AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MOYORS OF GUIPUZCOA), WITH A MANDATE FROM A BROAD SPECTRUM OF BASQUE POLITICAL GROUPS RANGING FROM THE PNV AND OTHER CENTER LEFT PARTIES THROUGH RADICAL ETA (MILITARY AND POLITICAL MILITARY). MET TUESDAY FOR TWO HOURS WITH PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ TO DISCUSS THE AMNESTY QUESTION. THE FOUR MAN BASQUE DELEGATION REPORTEDLY STATED THEY SAW "A SMALL HOPE FOR TOTAL AMNESTY BUT IT IS VERY DIFFICULT".

4. MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION THEN MET YESTERDAY IN BIARRITZ FRANCE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SOME OF THE ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAD BACKED THEIR MEETINGS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, REPORTEDLY INCLUDING BOTH ETA BRANCHES, LATER YESTERDAY BUT APPARENTLY NOT NECESSARILY AS THE RESULT OF THIS MEETING, ALL OF THE GROUPS WHICH SUPPORTED THE MEETING WITH SUAREZ REPORTEDLY ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE IN SAN SEBASTIAN CALLING FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE ALL BASQUE POLITICAL PRISONERS AND ALLOW THE RETURN OF ALL EXILES BY MAY 24) (THE FIRST DAY OF THE OFFICIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN)
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5. THE COMMUNIQUE SIGNERS DID NOT SPECIFY WHAT THEIR RESPONSE WOULD BE IF THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT COMPLY. THE PSOE, AND PCE, WHICH WERE NOT INVOLVED IN THE MEETING WITH SUAREZ AND THE SAN SEBASTIAN COMMUNIQUE, HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK FOR A TOTAL AMNESTY BUT WOULD PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS GRANTED. IN CONTRAST MOST RADICAL BASQUE GROUPS HAVE CONDITIONED THEIR PARTICIPATION ON THE GRANTING OF SUCH AN AMNESTY. THE PNV LEFT ITS POSITION VAGUE ONE MADRID PRESS REPORT HAS ETA TERRORISTS CONTINUING TO THREATEN "INDIRECT ACTION" (UNDEFINED) IF THE MAY 15 DEADLINE IS NOT MET.

6. COMMENT AMCONSUL BILBAO EXPECTS TENSION IN THE BASQUE PROVINCES TO BUILD UNTIL SUNDAY MAY 15 WHEN THE PRO AMNESTY WEEK CULMINATES. THE POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WITH THE POLICE IS HIGH. THERE REPORTEDLY ARE APPROXIMATELY 30 BASQUE POLITICAL

PRISONERS STILL INCARCERATED, AND THEY APPARENTLY
COULD BE FREED ONLY AFTER A SENSITIVE CASE BY CASE
REVIEW. BECAUSE THEY ALL WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN
PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN BLOOD CRIMES, ANY DECISION ON
THEIR RELEASE CLEARLY WOULD BE AS MUCH A POLITICAL
AS A LEGAL JUDGEMENT. STABLER

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